

AN
E P I S T L E
TO

A FRIEND at ROME.

Written by Stephen Lubbock



A N
E P I S T L E
T O
A F R I E N D
A T
R O M E.

“Pierides! vos hæc facietis maxima Gallo,
“Gallo, cujus amor tantum mihi crescit in horas
“Quantum vere novo viridis se subjicit alnus.”

L O N D O N,
Printed in the Year MDCCLXXII.



A N
E P I S T L E
T O A
F R I E N D at R O M E.

E'ER since, my Lælius, with reluctant hand
Parting, I left thee on the lonesome strand
Where Dover his proud cliff tremendous rears,
Nor the worst pow'r of angry Neptune fears;
Pleas'd I engrave upon this faithful heart
The spotless image of thy fair desert.
When far from Britain, from those joys remov'd,
That converse, that society you lov'd;
When thy dear country trusts thee from her arms,
Lur'd by the rich display of foreign charms;

B

Still

Still with the hope, that when thy search is o'er,
 Thy native Britain will delight the more;
 Say, when these thoughts engage the pensive mind,
 What cure to sooth thy absence shall I find?
 Verse yet remains—indulge it's genial pow'r—
 Blest source of comfort in a vacant hour!
 When the dull day drags heavily along,
 But for the tuneful eloquence of song.
 Oft has the muse, by solemn grief inspir'd,
 To contemplation's sob'rer walk retir'd;
 Escap'd from crouds, where tinsel'd coxcombs throng,
 To meditate for faded worth the song.
 Mourn'd for the young, the virtuous, and the brave,
 Snatch'd in their bloom to an untimely grave:
 Torn from a nation's wish, a parent's boast,
 And 'midst the wreck of slaughter early lost.
 Such tribute, Britons, to your Wolfe and Howe,
 For ever shall a grateful land bestow:
 A land more proud of such illustrious birth,
 Than boundless empire o'er the sons of earth.

Sometimes

Sometimes the statesman's glorious toils I sing,
 Striving to soar upon a loftier wing;
 To paint the dangers, that in dreadful train
 Hung gath'ring, till ev'n bright-ey'd hope was vain.
 No common aids our bleeding country fought,
 Just to the desp'rate verge of ruin brought:
 When, Palinurus, thy superior care
 Restor'd sweet hope, and banish'd wild despair.
 Yet there are those, who feel a secret joy,
 Their pens in base detraction to employ.
 With these, thy deep and penetrating mind,
 The plans thy matchless policy design'd,
 To bend the stubborn pride of perjur'd France,
 Pass by the vulgar names of fate and chance:
 Are all hypocrisy, a glass set forth
 To cheat by semblance of intrinsic worth.
 Tho' Athens ridicul'd her pious sage,
 Yet Socrates shall shine thro' ev'ry age:
 The little malice of insulting foes,
 Serv'd but his merit brighter to disclose.

So

So flourish thou, nor mourn thy praises lost,
 Whilst the least spark of freedom Britons boast*.
 Or when less serious hours the muse employ,
 And Amoret inspires the song to joy:
 My words to softest melody are set,
 To sing thy virtues, lovely Amoret.
 Not the fair theme of tender Hammond's lays,
 Tho' grac'd with all the elegance of praise:
 Not Dashwood's beauties in their envy'd flow'r,
 Shone with such full pre-eminence of pow'r.
 Waldegrave, whose air, whose majesty and grace,
 Fame long has honor'd with the foremost place;
 Could she (too flatt'ring victory!) resume
 What time has wasted of her former bloom,

* These lines are to be understood as pointing particularly to those four glorious years of Mr. Pitt's administration, when he rescued us from a state of despondency to the most flourishing and envied perfection of power. But it is not, whilst this great minister lives, that he must expect his full portion of praise. I shall therefore take the liberty of recommending to him what Cicero, who knew more of human nature than any man, has said on the subject. " *Servi igitur iis etiam iudicibus qui multis post seculis de te iudicabunt; et quidem haud scio, an incorruptius quam nos. Nam et sine amore, et sine cupiditate: rursus sine odio et sine invidia iudicabunt.*"

In all the roseat pride of health and years,
 Not with thy majesty and grace appears.
 Nor she, the lavish theme of ev'ry tongue,
 She on whose smiles admiring thousands hung :
 Not Coventry, with all the charms combin'd,
 That fancy pictur'd to her Mason's mind.
 E'er could that sense, and strong expression show,
 Which the bright eyes of Amoret bestow.
 Thus with a mind unstain'd, a fancy free,
 Those intervals, my friend, I give to thee ;
 Which else perplex'd in folly's winding snare,
 Mock all our foresight, and elude our care.
 But now, harmonious Poesy ! infuse
 Thy choicest gifts into the feeble muse :
 Breathe thro' her numbers all thy quick'ning fire,
 And raise the drooping genius of her lyre :
 For tho' 'tis pleasing to dissolve at woe,
 When virtue bids the manly sorrows flow :
 Tho' we delight our grateful harps to raise,
 When Patriots from their country merit praise :

C

Far

Far sweeter founds the gen'rous ear detain,
 When friendship pours her fond impassion'd strain.
 Witness, ye sacred seats, ye letter'd groves,
 Which Phœbus fosters, and Minerva loves :
 Ye solemn shades, where plaintive Cowley thought,
 And Gray's high soul such daring wonders wrought.
 Pierian walks ! where mem'ry still returns,
 And at past scenes with kindled rapture burns :
 Witness the golden hour when first we join'd
 That loveliest intercourse of mind to mind.
 There, 'midst the lib'ral and ingenuous few,
 Early thy modest worth my praises drew :
 There, in the volumes of the learn'd and wise
 Science had all her gay creation rise :
 Unfolding to thy curious, patient eye
 What the pert, shallow coxcomb passes by.
 Go then, my Lælius, in this armour strong,
 And brave the tempting Syren's treach'rous song :
 Go ! Britain bids thee, urge thy destin'd aim
 And with a manly pride solicit fame :

What

What books in vain would teach, or pedants know,
 The world, a nobler study, shall bestow.
 O for one moment let me give the rein
 To sport with fancy on Italia's plain
 In luxury of thought I traverse o'er
 Her fragrant mountains, and her fertile shore:
 Unnumber'd beauties ev'ry sense delight,
 Till nature shines a Paradise to fight.
 Here did immortal Maro's lofty rhyme
 Triumph o'er death, and mock the rage of time:
 Here courtly Horace with unrival'd art,
 Stole soft admission to the yielding heart:
 Whilst bolder Juvenal's indignant page
 Bar'd the foul deeds of a degen'rate age:
 To prosp'rous vice no mean indulgence gave,
 Nor in the proud Patrician spar'd the knave.
 Nor shall the Bard to pale oblivion doom
 Those better times of uncorrupted Rome:
 When in the cause of sacred freedom bold
 Fabricius laugh'd at Pyrrhus and his gold:

In

In arts and arms the great republick rose,
 By friends still envy'd and rever'd by foes:
 Here patriot Brutus rais'd that noble flame,
 That rescu'd Rome from servitude and shame:
 Unshaken 'gainst the proud oppressor stood,
 And satisfy'd the chaste Lucretia's blood.
 View the same Brutus in the consul-chair:
 Mark his bold front, his fixt determin'd air:
 See the stern Licitors with their axes stand,
 Prepar'd to execute his dread command:
 See his own sons in life's meridian bloom,
 Cut off, a gen'rous sacrifice to Rome.
 What tho' posterity with-hold it's praise,
 Shock'd at the barb'rous boast of ancient days;
 The glorious patriot shall assert his claim,
 Adorn'd in Maro's verse with deathless fame *.

* To the testimony of the Poet, let us also add that of the Historian: "Quum inter
 " omne tempus pater vultusque, et os ejus spectaculo essent, eminente animo patrio
 " inter publicæ poenæ ministerium."

LIVY.

But where, Camillus, shall these numbers find
 The just resemblance of thy godlike mind?
 Exil'd from Rome by an ungrateful band,
 Crown'd with fresh lawrels from thy conqu'ring hand
 Tho' the same passions might resentment swell
 That taught the haughty Marcius to rebel:
 Name but his country, place her good in view,
 No private wrongs the great Camillus knew.
 Instant he flies — the Gauls oppose in vain, —
 Thousands in undistinguish'd heaps are slain:
 Eager they long dispute the well-fought field,
 Till mighty Brennus is constrain'd to yield;
 And the weak Romans, who grew pale with fear
 And trembled when they thought the Gauls were near,
 Camillus to their shame compels to know
 Ev'n Gauls to Romans are a paltry foe.
 Here in the vale of meek retirement blest,
 Scipio each ruder passion charm'd to rest:
 The Muses and Polybius form'd his youth
 To sober constancy, and spotless truth.

D

Let

Let others the more splendid wreath prepare
 And grace the victor with the spoils of War;
 Point out the Hero in ambitious verse,
 And Carthage from her glory fall'n rehearse:
 Be mine, Humanity, thy praise to sing,
 To paint those joys that from compassion spring:
 When the fair captive pleads her tender cause,
 And innocence the tear from virtue draws.
 Here the stern Cato with intrepid zeal
 Stood forth, assertor of the publick weal:
 Pierc'd thro' the finer veil that Cæsar drew,
 And set conspiracy in open view.
 " If traitors to the state can mercy claim,
 " Then has indeed soft mercy lost her name:
 " Justice is grossly mock'd, and death alone
 " For crimes of such complexion can atone."
 Then not a voice in Rome that blush'd to raise
 It's fondest tribute to their Cato's praise.
 But where, alas! is now thy former boast?
 Thy stoic fortitude in meanness lost:

Thy

Thy virtue but a bubble funk in air,
 Unfit adversity's rough storm to bear.
 Why should I name Pharsalia's fatal day,
 When the bold spoiler seiz'd his destin'd prey;
 When liberty her rifled sweets deplor'd,
 And tyranny in Julius was restor'd?
 Why should I name those plains where Pompey fled:
 He, who so oft to fields of triumph led
 His fearless thousands, whose unconquer'd arms
 Fill'd frighted Europe with such dire alarms;
 The hardier African's fierce spirit broke,
 And bent proud Asia to the Roman yoke?
 But o'er thy weakness let me draw the veil,
 Nor urge too far the melancholy tale:
 Grieving that Cato, through mistaken pride,
 At Utica dishonourably dy'd*.

But

* I cannot help being of this opinion about the end of this Roman, tho' I believe
 look'd upon then, as an heroic elevation of sentiment, and worthy of the greatness
 of a Roman soul. Horace says, "*Catonis nobile lethum*;" and I suppose his was the
 general language of the times. For my own part, I hope I have a proper respect for
 the character of so good a man as I am persuaded Cato was: but that in this point
 he

But bear me, Fancy, to that blest retreat,
 Of wit, of learning, eloquence the feat,
 Delightful Tusculum ! once favor'd spot,
 Where the great statesman publick cares forgot :

Where

he erred, and erred rather from pride, than the honest disdain of conscious virtue, that could not stoop to a thought of life with the loss of liberty, I am under no difficulty of determining. I place all to the account of the stoical doctrines, which, instead of exalting human nature, (to my apprehension) degrade it below its true dignity ; narrow the mind under the pretence of ennobling it, and, from I know not what ridiculous affectation of scrupulous virtue, and an untractable severity of manners, stifle every generous principle of humanity, and oppose the exercise of all those endearing acts of society that social intercourse recommends, and which are really (in the stile of a celebrated Female Writer) those *sweet civilities of life* that contribute most to felicity. Cicero, in his oration for Murena, exposes in a very fine spirited and masterly raillery, the nonsensicalness of the Stoical doctrines, and avails himself, like a compleat orator, even of the awful presence of Cato, to shew, that in the man of reputed integrity, and the most undeviating rectitude of heart, an inflexible obstinacy, a sour, contracted gloominess of disposition, and a want of indulgence to the infirmities of the rest of mankind, are qualities that throw a shade over the brightest characters, and diminish the efficacy of example. The arts of accommodation are detestable, when they lead to meanness, or bend to the servility of wicked compliances : but when they are made use of only to conciliate the affections of men, and to render virtue more lovely, as she is less forbidding, and easier to be approached, the arts of accommodation are then not only what the best political prudence would not hesitate of adopting, but what (I maintain it) the strictest moral obligation requires. And therefore it was upon the strength of this idea that Cicero closes so justly in his address to Cato, " Non ista quidem erunt meliora, quæ nunc sunt optima, sed certe condita jucundius." For want of a little pliability in the commerce of the world, a person with the very best intentions may occasion innumerable mischiefs. This was evidently the case with respect to Cato in his political conduct ; and in the other point of view in which I have particularly considered him, he does not appear to me that example of magnanimity to which by a sort of involuntary impulse we affix an idea as often as the name of Cato is mentioned. In short, the root of all was the Stoical doctrines, which neither suffered him to sacrifice, like a true Patriot, becomingly to the expediency of the times, or supported

him

Where by divine Philosophy inspir'd
 The saviour of imperial Rome retir'd.
 How would it wound immortal Tully's breast
 To find his Porticos by Monks possess'd:
 The wretched haunt of Superstition's train,
 Who dare our holiest Mysteries prophane:
 Cloathing Religion with a garb and air
 The sons of Piety would blush to wear.
 Cloyster'd inhabitants! exult ye now,
 That all that once was Tully lies so low:
 Smile o'er his ruins with malicious pride,
 Who spread that light ye impiously would hide:

him with real fortitude under the pressure of adversity. The authority of a very great writer, Lord Bolingbroke, will shew at least that I am not singular in my opinion—He speaks to both points; to his total disqualification as a Politician (which I believe nobody ever disputed), and to the pitifulness of putting himself to death.

“The safety of the commonwealth depended in that critical conjuncture upon a coalition of parties, the Senatorian order and the Equestrian—Tully had formed it, Cato broke it.”

Again, “But if this good (for I think he was not an able) Man erred in the particular respects I have ventured to mention, he deserved most certainly the glory he has acquired, by the general tenor of his conduct, and by dedicating the whole labour of his life to the service of his country. He would have deserved more, if he had persisted in maintaining the same cause to the end; and would have died, I think, with a better grace at Munda than Utica.”

SPRIT OF PATRIOTISM.

E

From

From unassisted Nature built his plan
 And held the moral picture up to Man :
 Whilst ye, beyond that Heathen's utmost reach
 Enlighten'd, prostitute the truths ye teach ;
 Repentance to deluded souls ye give,
 Usurpers of high Heav'n's Prerogative !

Here then we pause—whilst sob'rer Truth displays,
 Not the bold pourtraiture of antient days :
 Not the brave Heroes, whose victorious Arms
 Spread thro' the conquer'd world such dire alarms :
 The pow'r of daring Hannibal withstood,
 And ting'd the Afric sands with Punic blood :
 But in their stead a mean, degen'rate band,
 Unus'd to toils, unbroken to command ;
 By sloth enervated, debauch'd by ease,
 Whom vig'rous emulation scorns to please.
 Lost in soft blandishments, and melting airs,
 Music and love hy turns engross their cares :
 Women instructed just to sing and play,
 And men, to Cicerò their time away.

Is this the Roman sap? Ye bastard Race,
 Of Romulus ye shew no distant trace;
 More like the puny Monarchs of the East,
 Sunk in lewd revelings, and midnight feast.
 Save that in Mem'ry's bright ideal train
 No vestiges of female worth remain:
 So chang'd in sentiment, in dress, in name,
 That now 'tis sport to an Italian Dame:
 If, seiz'd with noblest rapture at her worth,
 I call Cornelia's modest merit forth;
 Or venture to admire that prudish she,
 That died deliberate for Chastity.
 What tho' the scenes poetic Fancy drew,
 Breathe still alive, and glowing to the view:
 What tho' the lovely landshapes still remain,
 Where Nature not a beauty boasts in vain:
 Where without art the fragrant Myrtles bloom,
 And Violets the scented air perfume:
 Where the gay Orange bears it's blushing pride,
 And the rich Grape adorns the Mountain-side:

Where

Where golden harvests crown the gen'rous soil,
 And the luxurious Olive bursts with oil :
 Where Spring perpetual decks the smiling year,
 And the mild Heav'ns their softest colouring wear:
 Ne'er, Britain, shall thy happier sons repine,
 Whilst Peace, Content, and Liberty are thine.
 O that great Julius from his tomb could rise,
 And, hither pointing his astonish'd eyes,
 Behold transferr'd to Britain's happier coast ;
 That pow'r, the World's proud Mistress once could boast :
 That paltry Isle, that once provok'd his scorn,
 Pent up by Ocean, cheerless and forlorn ;
 That paltry Isle, pre-eminent in fame,
 Bids distant Nations tremble at her name :
 Protected Science in her borders grows,
 And Arts are nurs'd in elegant repose.
 Have ye not own'd this truth, illustrious pair ?
 Immortal Montesquieu ! and fam'd Voltaire ?
 Ye, who, amidst a light, unthinking race,
 Blaze out the wonders of the age ye grace :

Speak

Speak Britain's praise — to you she dares appeal,
 Who think with clearness, and with candor feel.
 Warm'd are your pages with that sacred fire,
 Our temper'd laws and government inspire.
 No proud, presumptuous Nobles dare invade
 Those rights our Ancestors have wisely made ;
 No heated populace, tho' — should arm,
 Can of our union break the magic charm :
 Nor is that King in safety on his throne ;
 Who by despotic pow'r would rule alone.
 Hence are our blessings — hence those envied stores ;
 That Heav'n indulgent for her Britain pours ;
 That cordial drop, whose mild and lenient art,
 Can comfort 'midst corroding cares impart ;
 That to the Peasant gives his grain secure,
 And tells the Cottager he is not poor.
 Such is that Country — such that happier clime,
 That claims the useful portion of thy time :
 Yet suffers thee o'er Earth and Seas to roam,
 More to endear to thee thy native home.—

F I N I S.

Speak Britain's praise — to you the theme is old
 Who think with candour, and with candid soul
 Would are your pages with that sacred fire
 Our temper'd laws and government refine;
 No proud, presumptuous Nobles dare invade
 Those rights our Ancestors have wisely made;
 No heedless populace, tho' should arise
 Can of our union break the magic chain;
 Nor is that King in safety on his throne;
 Who by despotic pow'r would rule alone.
 Hence are our blessings — hence those envied hours
 That Heav'n indulgent for her Britain pours;
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 Can comfort midst 65 MR 62
 That to the peasant gives his grain secure,
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 Such is that Country — such that happier clime
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 Yet suffers thee of Earth and Seas to roam,
 More to endure to thee thy native home.